INTERNATIONAL WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS EXPO (IWCE)
MARCH 7 – 11, 2011

Report to SIEC - March 15, 2011

PSIC Office Attendees:
  Michael Todd, Regional Interoperability Manager
  Andy Clark, Outreach Coordinator
  Suesan Nordman, Project Manager

IWCE includes a conference program of training, workshops and sessions on communications technologies and applications and an exhibit hall with over 300 suppliers showcasing the latest and technology in the convergent systems industry.

Below are highlights from the conference related to communications interoperability:

Keynote Address: Reflections from 9/11

Mark Tillman, Commander of Air Force One 2001-2009, including on September 11, 2001:

- Spoke about his experience on 9/11 and the following days.

- The reliance on cell phones by public safety personnel is a weakness. During an emergency, such technology will fail, as it did on September 11th.

- Combining public safety and private sector communication paths will result in excessive and detrimental traffic. Separate and specific mission critical communication paths for incidents need to be established.

- On September 11th, Air Force One was unable to communicate due to the extreme volume of traffic on VHF and UHF. (Do not underestimate surge!)

- Multiple disciplines must be able to communicate and interoperate, and this will require changes to technology and current systems.

Keynote Address: The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP): Essential for Interoperability

Chris Essid, Director of the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), Department of Homeland Security

- Discussed the vital role of the NECP and the necessity of achieving interoperability.

- The OEC is in the process of updating the NECP, but the anticipated release has been delayed, in order to include more information about broadband.

- Broadband and Long Term Evolution of Universal Terrestrial Radio Access Network (LTE) are being reviewed so that information can be included in the updated NECP; however, it is not known when LTE will be ready for mission critical voice applications.

- As was done during the creation of the initial Plan, input from first responders is being collected and reviewed.

- The revised draft is approximately 75 percent complete, but there is NO estimated delivery date.
- Technology alone isn't the answer to achieving communications interoperability. Efforts must concentrate on the other lanes of the SAFECOM Continuum as well.

COML Awareness Workshop

Speakers included: Chris Baker, Fire Captain-Paramedic / Lead Fire Investigator, City of Roseville - Fire Department; Wes Rogers, Lieutenant, Fairfax County VA Fire-Rescue; and Robert Sisley, Police Sergeant (Retired), Miami-Dade Police Department.

- National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command Structure (ICS), when used with a qualified COML, is successful for incident management.
- The COML is responsible for the operational and technical aspects of incident communications; his/her critical duties include:
  - Participating in the planning process
  - Developing the Incident Communications Plan (ICS form 205)
  - Managing all communications resources to support the operational objectives
- COMLs should have:
  - Didactic Training (ICS 100, 200, 300, 700 and 800; federally recommended All-Hazards COML Course)
  - Work Experience (Supervisory experience; field responder qualifications, familiarity with local communications and resources)
  - Practical Experience (Completed COML Taskbook; demonstrated skills in the field)
- An Incident Action Plan (IAP) is a crucial part of ICS. The ability to easily use the IAP impacts the success of individual responders and Incident Commanders
- Communications technologies should support the operation, not drive it.
- Effective incident communications = operational objectives + qualified COML + qualified personnel + appropriate technology.

COML Courses

- The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) will begin managing COML courses by July, 2011.Once it is transitioned, Certificates of Completion will be granted through EMI.
- The OEC Approved Instructor List is being migrated to EMI; in the near future, Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) will be given access to this list.
- The three-day COML Training Course curriculum will grow to four days.
  - Approved Instructors will be briefed in March to review changes to current materials.
- EMI does not currently have an established curriculum for a COML Train the Trainer (T-t-T) course, but one is under development:

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- o The single day course with adjunct teaching requirement may be changed to a three day course
- o Revisions may be released by the end of the year.

COMT Courses

- This program will <u>not</u> be rolled out nationally by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), like the COML program was in 2008.
- Currently, COMT courses can only be requested through Technical Assistance.

<u>Narrowbanding by 2013: The Myth, the Realities...the Countdown</u>

Speakers: Alan Tilles, Partner, Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Pordy & Ecker, P.A.; Roberto Mussenden, Attorney-Advisor, Policy Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, FCC; David Buchanan, Spectrum Management Committee Chair, National Public Safety Telecommunications Council; Kenton Sturdevant, President, Land Mobile Communications Council;and Rick Smith, Captain/Communications Coordinator, Santa Maria Fire and RS Communication Consultants.

- The FCC has received several narrowbanding waiver requests, but they are only gathering information at this time and have not made any rulings thus far.
- Communications systems have been and *will be* shut down by the FCC for violations (examples include the Nevada Highway Patrol and a system at a Florida jail).
- If agencies in rural locations feel that wideband use will go undetected, they should consider that agencies in nearby areas that have narrowbanded will report interference to the FCC.
- If a licensee loses their license because they failed to narrowband, they will suffer the consequences and their spectrum will be reallocated.
- The National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) conducted a narrowbanding survey over the past couple of months. There were 360 respondents.
    - o When asked if they had narrowbanded:
        - ▪ 38% have
        - ▪ 57% have not
        - ▪ 5% are not sure
    - o Are they planning to migrate to a higher band:
        - ▪ 22% yes
    - o Have they determined the cost of narrowbanding?
        - ▪ 59% have done so
        - ▪ 41% have not
- The overall conclusion is that the nation is "behind the curve" to meet the 2013 deadline.
- According to the survey results, cost is the most important factor in narrowbanding status.

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- It is not advised for agencies to wait until 2012 to purchase equipment, since there may not be adequate vendor inventory.
- Errors do occur when the FCC grants licenses, so it may be prudent to use the services of a Frequency Coordinator to minimize risk. Be diligent when completing applications.
- Narrowbanding is positive:
  - More spectrum means more users and therefore more services.
  - This is an opportunity to standardize state interoperability channel names.
  - It allows systems to be reviewed and technology to be enhanced
- Communications equipment is used DAILY, so jurisdictions should be using their funds accordingly to account for all operational necessities.

Exhibit Floor

Multiple demonstrations were given on the conference floor.

- LTE – Motorola and Verizon, Harris, Lightsquared and Alcatel Lucent
- Multi band radios – Datron, Haris, Motorola, Thales
  - Datron is still developing radio. Thales is still working on theirs. There does not appear to be much progress in this radio since IWCE a year ago.
  - Harris and Motorola both have production model radios. Harris is still awaiting release of trunking software. Harris has developed a new antenna that is a whip, making it a bit more user friendly.
- New radio manufacturers – Hyterra
- Infrastructure
- Repeaters
- Networked with individuals from Clark County, Nevada who want to start working with Arizona to develop a Tri-state communications plan for that region

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